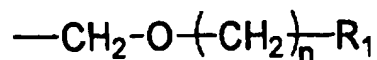


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A polymer compound comprising:
an alkali soluble group (i), wherein
at least one hydrogen atom of the alkali soluble group (i) is substituted by an acid dissociable, dissolution inhibiting group (ii) represented by a general formula (1):



(1)

(wherein R₁ represents a cycloaliphatic group which contains no more than 20 carbon atoms and may contain an oxygen atom, a nitrogen atom, a sulfur atom, or a halogen atom, and n represents 0 or an integer of 1 to 5[.]), and wherein

the polymer compound exhibits changed alkali solubility under the action of an acid.

2. (Currently amended) A polymer compound according to claim 1, wherein the alkali soluble group (i) is at least one selected from the group consisting of an alcoholic hydroxyl group, a phenolic hydroxyl group, ~~or~~ and a carboxyl group.

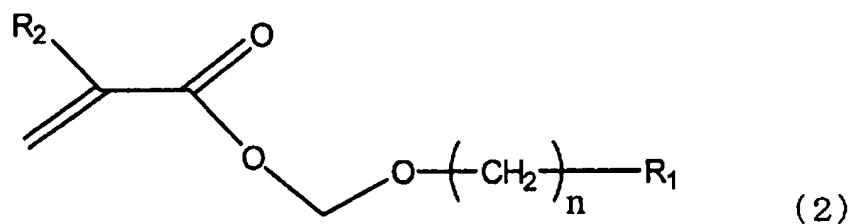
3. (Original) A polymer compound according to claim 2, wherein a carbon atom adjacent to the carbon atom bonded to the alcoholic hydroxyl group is bonded to at least one fluorine atom.

4. (Original) A polymer compound according to claim 1, wherein the cycloaliphatic group contains an adamantane backbone.

5. (Original) A polymer compound according to claim 1, wherein R₁ represents the cycloaliphatic group containing at least one hydrophilic group.

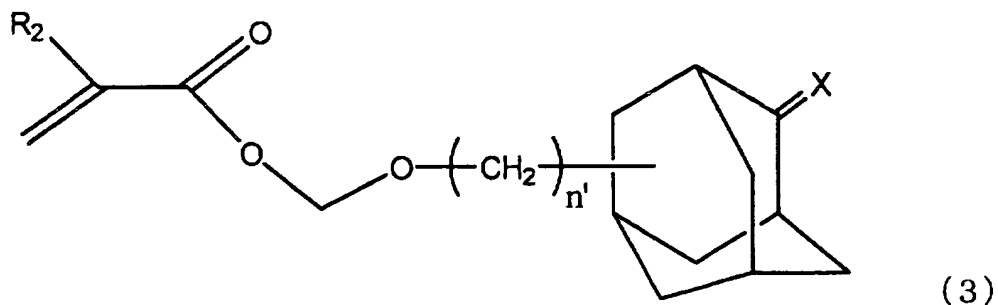
6. (Original) A polymer compound according to claim 1, wherein the hydrophilic group is at least one selected from the group consisting of a carbonyl group, an ester group, an alcoholic hydroxyl group, ether, an imino group, and an amino group.

7. (Original) A compound represented by a general formula (2):



(wherein R_1 represents a cycloaliphatic group which contains no more than 20 carbon atoms and may contain an oxygen atom, a nitrogen atom, a sulfur atom, or a halogen atom; n represents 0 or an integer of 1 to 5; and R_2 represents a hydrogen atom, a fluorine atom, a lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms, or a fluorinated lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms.).

8. (Currently amended) A compound according to claim 7, represented by a general formula (3):



(wherein R_2 represents ~~the same as the aforementioned~~ a hydrogen atom, a fluorine atom, a lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms, or a fluorinated lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms, X represents two hydrogen atoms or an oxygen atom, and n' represents 0 or 1.).

9. (Original) A polymer compound according to claim 1, comprising a structural unit (a1) derived from the compound according to claim 7.

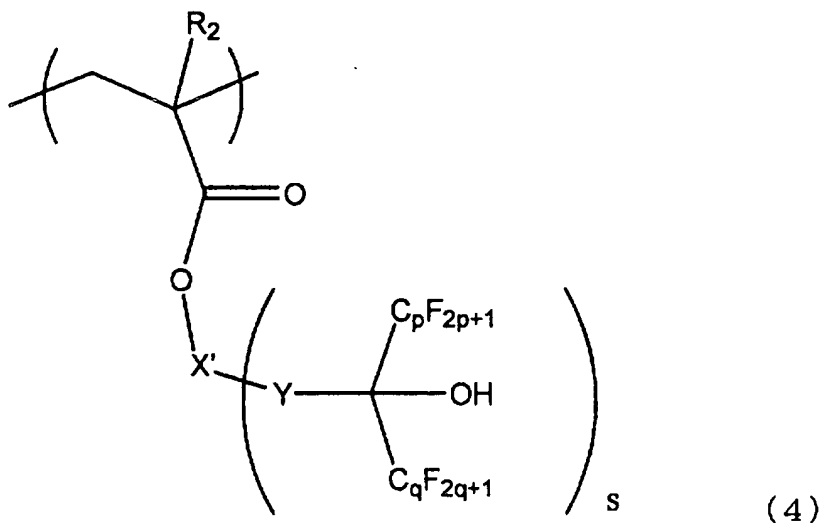
10. (Original) A polymer compound according to claim 1, comprising a structural unit (a1) derived from the compound according to claim 8.

11. (Original) A polymer compound according to claim 9, further comprising a structural unit (a3) derived from (meth)acrylate containing a lactone-containing monocyclic or polycyclic group.

12. (Original) A polymer compound according to claim 11, wherein the structural unit (a3) comprises at least two mutually different structural units derived from (meth)acrylate containing a lactone-containing monocyclic or polycyclic group.

13. (Original) A polymer compound according to claim 11, further comprising a structural unit (a4) derived from (meth)acrylate containing a polar group-containing polycyclic group.

14. (Currently amended) A polymer compound according to claim 9, further comprising a structural unit (a6) represented by a general formula (4):



(wherein R_2 represents ~~the same as the aforementioned~~ a hydrogen atom, a fluorine atom, a lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms, or a fluorinated lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms, X' represents a divalent or trivalent cyclic group, Y represents an alkylene or alkyleneoxy group containing 1 to 6 carbon atoms which is divalent, p and q independently represent an integer of 1 to 5, and s represents an integer of 1 or 2.).

15. (Currently amended) A photoresist composition comprising:

a base material resin component (A) which exhibits changed alkali solubility under the action of an acid; and

an acid generator component (B) which generates the acid on exposure to radiation, wherein

the base material resin component (A) is the polymer compound according to ~~any one of claims claim 1, 9, or 10.~~

16. (Original) A photoresist composition according to claim 15, further comprising a nitrogen-containing organic compound (D).

17. (Original) A resist pattern formation method comprising:
- forming a photoresist film on a substrate using the photoresist composition according to claim 15;
 - exposing the photoresist film; and
 - developing the exposed photoresist film to form a resist pattern.